

The Office of the Adjutant General
State of Virginia
ATTN: Public Affairs Office
Bldg. 316 - Fort Pickett
Blackstone, Virginia, 23824

Mail to:

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Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Andre McIntyre

1st Lt. John Hinton of the 266th Military Police Company talks with students from the Iman Abbas School in Basra, Iraq, on April 13, 2009. The 266th MP Co. deployed to Iraq in early December 2008 with approximately 150 Soldiers. The Soldiers in the unit are conducting Police Transition Team operations in the northern section of the city of Basra.



*Virginia Guard
Incident Response Force
trains to support
civil authorities*

Virginia
GuardPost
SERVING THE ARMY & AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF VIRGINIA

MARCH - APRIL 2009



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FROM THE TOP



Good leadership for all the National Guard centers on the three Air Force core values

By Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.
Adjutant General of Virginia



Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.

In late April I had a great opportunity to take part in a discussion on the topic of leadership with a distinguished panel that included Secretary of the Air Force Michael B. Donley, Gen. John D.W. Corley, commander of Air Combat Command, and Brig. Gen. Mark A. Barrett, 1st Fighter Wing commander.

While this particular discussion focused on Air Force leadership, I think the basic principles of leadership the panel discussed can apply to the Army Guard, Air Guard, the Virginia Defense Force and our civilian employees as well.

My approach to leadership is simple, and it centers on the core values of the United States Air Force: integrity first, service before self and excellence in all we do.

I start with "excellence in all we do" because I think a leader's primary job is to accomplish the mission, and he or she has to make sure that organization accomplishes the goals set by higher authorities.

The value of "service above self" means that a good leader looks to needs of their organization before looking to his or her own needs. Whether it is the young Soldier or Airmen below you or the organization as a whole, you must care more about those people than you do for yourself.

The guiding principle that all good leaders should subscribe to is "integrity first." As we work to accomplish assigned missions and take care of people in our organization, we must do so in a way that does not compromise our values and what we know is the right way of doing things.

We have seen too often in the corporate world where the value of integrity seems secondary to the goal of making a profit, and we have to make sure that we never

sacrifice our integrity to accomplish our organizational goals.

Whether you wear the uniform or serve as a civilian in military organizations or

This NCO was competent in his job, he put others in the unit before himself and no one pushed him to do something that he knew wasn't for the good of the unit. He embodied the core values that every leader should have.

Corporate America, the Air Force core values are a valuable guidepost for any leader to follow.

Truly good leadership can't come from just one of these values, but all three must be applied.

One major challenge that leaders face today is that in many respects Americans don't share a common set of goals. As we embrace a military that is more diverse than ever, our organizations are made of people from a wide variety of backgrounds

and experiences. Having a core set of values gives leaders a common framework to chart a course for their organization.

As a young lieutenant, I experienced first-hand how quickly and effectively a good leader can take charge of a situation. During an overseas deployment, I was tasked to serve as a vehicle control officer, and I was struggling with getting the mission accomplished the way I felt it should be done. An Air Force tech sergeant stepped up, asked me what needed to be done, and he proceeded to make things happen to accomplish the mission.

We have a great heritage in our non-commissioned officer corps, and we have to rely on their knowledge and abilities to get things done. The experience I had as a young lieutenant showed me how an NCO who commanded the respect of others was able to get this mission done, and that experience influenced me throughout my military career.

This NCO was competent in his job, he put others in the unit before himself and no one pushed him to do something that he knew wasn't for the good of the unit. He embodied the core values that every leader should have.

For our organizations to get better, we have to talk about leadership with our senior leaders, and they need to talk about leadership with their subordinates. As we are having those discussions, we have to talk about the responsibilities of

being in charge and the gravity of being a leader, as well as the consequences of the decisions that are made with ill-conceived plans or casual adherence to regulations.

With a solid foundation of common values we can all identify with, leaders at all levels need to mentor their junior leaders and help them develop the sense of responsibility and the skills they need to give every member of our organization the kind of leadership they deserve.

News Briefs

Virginia Air Guard opens new recruiting office

The Virginia Air National Guard recently opened a new Recruiting Office in the Turnberry Crossing Shopping Center in Newport News. Anyone interested in learning more about the Virginia Air National Guard is invited to stop in during business hours and speak with a recruiter.

"We are excited to be opening this new Recruiting Office; and we are delighted to be a part of Hampton Roads," says Senior Master Sergeant Joshua Costen, the Virginia Air Guard's Recruiting and Retention Superintendent. "With our largest unit, the 192nd Fighter Wing, now at Langley Air Force Base, it is important that we increase our recruiting services on the Peninsula.

The Recruiting Office, which is located at 12638 Jefferson Ave., Turnberry Crossing Shopping Center, Unit 20, is open Monday through Friday except holidays, 7 a.m. to 5:30

p.m.

Individuals interested in learning more about military service with the Virginia Air National Guard, its training opportunities and educational benefits, may contact the Recruiting Office at 1-800-TOGO-ANG or 757-225-0340.

Virginia Guard pays tribute to last of the "Bedford Boys"

Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard joined family, friends and the community of Bedford April 22 to bid farewell to Maj. Elisha "Ray" Nance, the last of the "Bedford Boys" who stormed the beaches of Normandy almost 65 years ago. Nance passed away April 19 at the age of 94.

Nance was one of 32 Virginia Guard Soldiers from Bedford's Company A, 116th Infantry, 29th Division who were among the 160,000 Allied troops that landed along a 50-mile stretch of heavily-fortified French coastline to fight Nazi Germany and begin the march across Europe to defeat Hitler

More than two dozen Virginia Guard Soldiers were on hand for Nance's funeral service and helped the community remember his service, as well as the service of the other Bedford Soldiers.

Virginia Guard families join White House Easter Egg Roll

Virginia National Guardsmen and their families joined over 1,000 other military children and their parents for the annual White House Easter Egg Roll, April 18 on the South Lawn of the White House.

More than 70 participants from the Virginia National Guard came out to join in the day's activities with thousands of civilian and military families from across the country. Over 500 National Guard families from five states attended the egg roll with some Soldiers leaving as early as 4 a.m. to head to the nation's capital.

Children under 10 were also given a souvenir egg to take home. This year's egg is the greenest egg in history,

according to the White House website. It is made from hardwood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, which means the wood comes from environmentally and socially sustainable forests. In addition to being "green" the eggs were also colored bright green.

In addition to the traditional Easter egg roll and Easter egg hunt, President Obama and his family invited the participants to enjoy several other activities including live musical performances by Fergie, Ziggy Marley and others, cooking with celebrity chefs in the Kid's Kitchen, readings at the Storytime Stage, and dance, yoga and jump rope workshops.

The theme this year, "Let's Go Play," was intended to encourage America's youth to lead healthy and active lives.

According to the White House, over 30,000 invitations to the event were sent out via email. This was the first time invitations were sent out electronically. The first Easter egg roll was held in 1814 by then first lady Dolly Madison.

For more on these stories, visit <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/newsindex.html>

Virginia National Guard Federal Deployments

# *	Unit	Where Deployed	Home Town
170	266th Military Police Company	Iraq	Manassas
160	180th Engineer Company	Iraq	Powhatan
200	276th Engineer Battalion	Afghanistan	Richmond
16	Brigade Embedded Training Team	Afghanistan	Various Locations
16	Battalion Embedded Training Team	Afghanistan	Various Locations
35	192nd Maintenance Group	Japan	Langley Air Force Base
25	192nd Intelligence Squadron	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Langley Air Force Base
30	Data Processing Unit	Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan	Manassas
40	Various Virginia Army Guard Units	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Various Locations
50	Various Virginia Air Guard Units	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Various Locations

* All listings for numbers of Soldiers/Airmen are approximate as of *May 4, 2009*

Fort Pickett hosts U.S., coalition forces for Patriot 7

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

U.S. Airmen and Soldiers alongside coalition forces from around the world, mostly security forces and special operations personnel, trained at Fort Pickett in April as part of a program called Patriot Seven.

The six-day course, which wrapped up its 11th iteration April 24, is an Air Force-run exercise to teach personnel to view the ground through a remotely operated, video-enhanced receiver sent by a downlink feed from any aircraft equipped with video targeting pods, according to Lt. Col. Ben Votipka, a joint terminal attack controller instructor.

"This exercise is to teach people, in their missions, how to use that video downlink to have greater situational awareness about what is going on at the target area, en route to the target area, and as they are proceeding in and out of the target area," said Votipka, a member of the North Carolina Air Guard.

Throughout the course the students learn how to operate the ROVER and have classes on maneuvers. They must set up a tactical operations center during the course

and put their training to the test during several field training exercises.

Students have come from all over the world to receive the training. There have been students from Germany, Canada, Poland, Australia, and the U.K., as well as several others.

The Students learn to view the battlespace before they enter so they can make informed decisions to how they will react to the situation before they enter it.

"They can know what is in the target area before they get there, so they can make a decision," said Votipka. "They can safely go in there, execute the mission and get back home safely."

"They need the visibility overhead to provide security and information and reconnaissance of areas before they are going to be moving in to," said Air Force Master Sgt. Antonio Rodriguez, a Patriot Seven student. "It provides them capability to get the information and distribute it very quickly."

The training they learn here at Fort



Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

American and Canadian forces take cover behind a humvee and return fire during a simulated ambush as part of one of the field training exercises during Patriot 7 at Fort Pickett, Va.

Pickett may very likely be used to save their lives and the lives of other security forces, Special Forces operators, and Office of Special Investigation agents when applied to real life situations overseas in Iraq or Afghanistan.

"As the dynamics of Iraq and Afghanistan continue to evolve and things begin to escalate, it's integral for operators, security forces, Airmen and OSI agents that go out to conduct their missions to have capability like this," said Rodriguez, an Airman in the 12th Security Forces Squadron at Randolph Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

The location of Fort Pickett in regards to its proximity to Air Force bases, Navy bases and Virginia National Guard aviation facilities has proven beneficial to the program as well, according to Votipka.

"The best part about being located here is the access we have to so many flying units who are willing to help us out," said Votipka. "Our students are able to talk directly to pilots so they get top-notch, real-world experience. It also gives pilots a chance to work with folks on the ground the same way they might while they're deployed."

"People from all over want to come here and learn what we have to teach them," said Lt. Col. Greg Harbin, the training commander. "Irregular warfare training is vital to surviving attacks and conducting operations right now."

The "Seven" in Patriot Seven refers to the seven OSI agents and security force Airmen who were killed in an attack overseas. That attack is what sparked the creation of the Patriot Seven program.



Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Senior Airman Harvey and his German counterpart observe the video being sent from an aircraft on the ROVER during Patriot 7 at Fort Pickett, Va.



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On the Cover



Soldiers from the Virginia Guard Incident Response Force assist a simulated casualty during a situational training exercise April 3-5 at Fort Pickett. (Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs)

The Adjutant General
Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.

Chief of Public Affairs
Maj. Cotton Puryear
cotton.puryear@us.army.mil

Army Guard Public Affairs Officer
Capt. Matt Nowak
matthew.nowak@us.army.mil

Air Guard Public Affairs Officer
Lt. Col. Debbie Magaldi
deborah.magaldi@varich.ang.af.mil

GuardPost Editor
Sgt. 1st Class A.J. Coyne
andrew.coyne@us.army.mil

Public Affairs Staff
Sgt. Terra Gatti
Sgt. Jesse Houk
Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Sgt. John Slosser
Spc. Geoff Dudley

Public Affairs Office location
Bldg. 316 - Fort Pickett
Blackstone, Virginia, 23824
434-298-6107

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Virginia Guard logistics advisory teams head for duty in Iraq

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Four 10-Soldier Logistics Military Advisory Teams from the Virginia National Guard's Virginia Beach-based 329th Regional Support Group conducted departure ceremonies March 15 in Virginia Beach and Gate City to mark the official start of their federal active duty tour. The mission of the four teams will be to mentor, coach and advise the Iraqi Army with professional advice on various issues relating to logistics with the goal of helping the Iraqi forces improve their ability to function independently.

The two groups of Soldiers linked up at Fort Riley, Kansas to begin their mobilization training. The four teams are expected to begin duty at various locations in Iraq beginning in early June, and the mobilization is expected to last 12 months. The Soldiers conducted pre-mobilization training at Fort Pickett since early March.

"We are trying to enable the Iraqi Army to take over the complete logistical system for themselves," said Maj. Doyle Gillis, one of the four LMAT leaders. "That involves them ordering parts, moving supplies and making sure troops out front have what they need before they even know they need it."

Gillis said that the Iraqi Army has made tremendous improvements in their

logistical systems over the past several years. "Hopefully we can take them even further and make sure they are able to completely take care of themselves," he said.

"You are off to do an important mission, one that has high visibility across the spectrum and one that I know you will complete with great confidence and great affect," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia. "As we wind down combat operations in Iraq and moved towards the role of support, the mission of these LMATs will be vitally important."

Newman thanked the Soldiers for their service, noting that Soldiers in the today's Army National Guard are volunteers who raised their hand and pledged to serve the president or the governor when called to duty.

Newman also pledged the Virginia Guard's support to the Soldiers' families while they are deployed. "We will support your needs to get your mission done, and we will support these great family members and friends that remain behind. We understand they too have a significant burden in your absence," Newman said.

"What we see here today is a small slice of what makes America great," said Col. Tim Williams, commander of the 329th Regional Support Group. "You are the best of our commonwealth and our nation.

There is a 'can-do' attitude that is there, and I have ever confidence you are going to do great things."

Williams echoed Newman's pledge to support the families of the deployed Soldiers, and said that his staff would be available to assist family members with any issues that might come up during the deployment.

Each team will



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Va. Guard Public Affairs
Lt. Col. John Costanzo gets a hug from his daughters before departing for mobilization training at Fort Riley, Kan., in preparation for a deployment to Iraq.

be led by a lieutenant colonel who will serve as a senior logistics advisor, and two other officers will act as a logistics staff advisor and base management and engineer advisor. Highly experienced non-commissioned officers will act as advisors for ammunition supply and storage, food service, administrative support, bulk fuel and supply, equipment maintenance and medical services. An additional non-commissioned offer will serve as the team's noncommissioned officer in charge.

"We searched across the state to find the best person for each job," Gillis said. "We were looking for someone who is not only an expert in their field, but also for someone who has good people skills and can relate to and mentor the Iraqi Army."

Soldiers from all over Virginia have been selected for the mission with approximately five Soldiers coming from Northern Virginia, approximately 10 Soldiers from the Richmond area, approximately five Soldiers from the Hampton Roads area and approximately 10 coming from the Roanoke and Southwest Virginia area.

The mobilization orders call for an active duty period not to exceed 400 days, but the Secretary of Defense can extend tours for operational needs not to exceed 24 months or 730 days.

Virginia Soldiers learn from medical professionals

By Sgt. Jesse L. Houk
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Virginia National Guard medics from Company C, 429th Brigade Support Battalion participated in unique training March 7 which allowed them to integrate their skills and knowledge with that of civilian medical professionals in the greater Charlottesville area.

The Soldiers of Company C were able to interact with both the radiology and emergency department at the University of Virginia Health Systems and were also able to ride along with the Charlottesville-Albemarle Rescue Squad as it responded to emergency calls.

The connection with the civilian medical community was established through 1st Lt. Jessica K. Melin, Company C health services support officer, who worked at the UVA hospital two years earlier.

"For years we didn't go into the community, but now we are tapping into a resource we may have previously overlooked," said Melin. "The more we reach out to the community the more they respond in a positive way."

Although this is only the second time Soldiers have teamed up with civilian medical professionals, that positive connection is evident.



Photo by Sgt. Jesse L. Houk, Virginia Guard Public Affairs
John E. Burruss, deputy chief of the Charlottesville-Albemarle Rescue Squad (center), Spc. Eli R. Lovell, combat medic for C Company, 429th BSB (right), and a Charlottesville-Albemarle firefighter discuss techniques and experiences within their respective fields.



Photo by Sgt. Jesse L. Houk, Virginia Guard Public Affairs
Pvt. Hyun D. Chung (center), Spc. William F. Hall and Spc. Eli R. Lovell, combat medics in the Virginia Army National Guard, help the Charlottesville-Albemarle Rescue Squad provide care for an injured man during training March 7.

"I was happy to get a phone call saying that the National Guard wanted to come back," said John E. Burruss, deputy chief of the Charlottesville-Albemarle Rescue Squad. "Everyone down here really likes the job that they are doing so they really do enjoy sharing their knowledge with the Soldiers."

Burruss has been a volunteer with the rescue squad for 30 years. There is a lot of information to be obtained through him and his staff but there is also a vast amount of knowledge that some Soldiers have in the medical field as well.

Capt. Wesley R. Grieve, the company commander, is also a Prince William County fire and rescue technician. He is primarily a paramedic but is also

trained as a firefighter.

"The primary benefit of this training is that it boosts the confidence level of medics because it allows the Soldiers to put their classroom knowledge into practice," said Grieve. "As a medic you hate to see people who are hurt, but in doing so, it will help Soldiers maintain composure, stay calm and provide the necessary help when it counts."

Skills are perishable and frequent practice is needed to maintain those skills that are so vital to being able to provide excellent medical support.

"Our sergeants always remind us that if you don't use our training we will lose it and to go from five months of advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston to one weekend a month, the risk of losing a skill is very high," said Spc. Eli R. Lovell, a combat medic.

"This training dramatically helps prevent the loss of skills that are important for the health and safety of the Soldier. It ranks pretty high because it relates to the job that we do. We do so much common task training that our specific job sometimes gets neglected. This allows us to stay sharp."

Fort Pickett celebrates Earth Day

By Capt. Matt Nowak
Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs

Fort Pickett held its annual event April 21 to inspire awareness and appreciation for the environment in anticipation of the nationwide Earth Day event. The event was hosted by Fort Pickett's environmental staff and included displays and presentations about the installation's environmental fields.

Displays covered a range of topics, from the display of historical artifacts and green cleaning to spill response and forestry service.

A functional worm compost bin was one of the more visual and interactive displays. The plastic container contained wasted organic material such as fruits, vegetables, paper products and eggshells. The process works because worms eat food scraps, which become compost as they pass through the worm's body. Once the worms finish the work the remnants become nutrient-rich soil used for gardens.

"When we take the display to schools, children love to look at the worms in action," Amy Haynes, an environmental



Photo by Capt. Matt Nowak, Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs

Col. Tom Wilkinson, commander of the Maneuver Training Center, looks at historical photos of Fort Pickett at the 2009 Fort Pickett Earth Day event April 21.

specialist with the Virginia National Guard's Environmental Program, said. "It really gives them a great visual to see how food waste can be turned into useful compost."

Haynes also noted the school children will either run away from the worms or stick their arms in the pile to feel the texture and also to look for the baby worms.

Fort Pickett has an area of 41,770 acres, of which 32,897 acres are forested. Forestry supervisor Hylton Haynes ensures the forested lands are managed properly and the natural resources are protected.

"The goal of forestry management is to improve access to maneuver training areas and make them safer while allowing the land to be more sustainable," Haynes stressed.

As part of the forestry program, money is put back into the Commonwealth of Virginia in the form of state entitlements

through the sale of timber. In 2008, Virginia public school systems received almost \$100,000 from the program. Trees are cut down when there is new construction or an area is cleared because of training.

"All tree removal we do is very well planned and has a purpose. We won't do any unnecessary clearing," Haynes said.

Fort Pickett's recycling program was also highlighted during the event. Fort Pickett has an active recycling program and is the largest organization that recycles in Nottoway County.

They recycle oil, lubricants, antifreeze, paper, and metals. Many of the environmental programs are proactive. However, the Fort Pickett fire department is ready to react to any hazardous material spills. The full time force will respond to a hazardous material spill on the installation at any time. It has equipment that can handle small spills on the ground to larger spills in streams or ponds.

The department will also brief incoming units on spill procedures and provides spill kits for spills under five gallons for internal remediation.

Fort Pickett's environmental program is very well rounded and integrates many areas of conservation. The program's goal is to raise awareness of the environment and to comply with federal, state and local laws while maintaining the land viable for future training.



Photo by Capt. Matt Nowak, Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs

Amy Haynes, an environmental specialist with the Virginia National Guard Environmental Office, shows the worm compost container at the 2009 Fort Pickett Earth Day event April 21 at Fort Pickett. The plastic container contained wasted organic material, Worms eat food scraps, which become compost as they pass through the worm's body.

Huxtable assumes duties of Assistant AG for Army

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. Stephen L. Huxtable assumed the duties of the Assistant Adjutant General of Virginia for Army from Brig. Gen. Eugene A. Stockton April 5, 2009. Huxtable was promoted to brigadier general in a ceremony at Fort Pickett Sunday afternoon, and the ceremony also marked the retirement for Stockton who is ending his Virginia Army National Guard career that began in 1980.

As the Assistant Adjutant General for Army, Huxtable reports to the Adjutant General of Virginia and is responsible for overseeing all training, logistics and personnel matters for almost 8,000 men and women of the Virginia Army National Guard serving in 47 armories throughout Virginia.

"Steve Huxtable brings to this position not only a deep understanding of Army National Guard procedures and operations, but also the most thorough understanding of the Virginia Department of Military Affairs as a state agency," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia. "Those talents, along with his compassion for the welfare of Soldiers and their families and the energy that Steve displays in every task he is given makes an assistant adjutant general who will provide great leadership to the Virginia National Guard."

The Honorable John Marshall, Virginia Secretary of Public Safety, also commended Huxtable on his experience, as well as his understanding of the Virginia National Guard mission both here in Virginia and overseas.

"Steve Huxtable always finds a way to get the job done, and he is someone you can always depend on when times are tough," Marshall said. "He deeply cares about our Guardsmen and their families, and he truly is a leader and deserving of this promotion."

Huxtable, a resident of the Short Pump area in Henrico County, said he felt honored and humbled by the promotion, and he looked forward to the opportunity to help make Virginia Guard Soldiers successful.

"If I can make Soldiers successful by getting them the training, logistics and



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Vera Huxtable affixes brigadier general rank on her husband Stephen L. Huxtable during his promotion ceremony at Fort Pickett April 5, as Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, looks on.

resources they need, then we will all be successful," Huxtable said.

Huxtable said his top priority will be retaining quality Soldiers in the Virginia Army National Guard to ensure the organization has the personnel strength to conduct the missions assigned by Virginia or the federal government. He said he plans to meet with commanders and senior noncommissioned officers to discuss ways to make sure Soldiers are getting quality training and their families are being provided any care they need, whether it is during a drill weekend or during a deployment.

"I couldn't be more proud of the direction the Virginia National Guard is going, and we hope to maintain the momentum developed under the leadership of Brig. Gen. Stockton," Huxtable said.

Stockton began his career in the Virginia National Guard in 1980, after having served in the Marine Corps. In his civilian career, Stockton currently serves as the Director of the Bureau of Field Operations for the Virginia State Police.

"It is hard to see an officer of General Stockton's caliber retire," Newman said. "I can't think of anyone I have served with who has given more time of himself and put more energy into a job, and I

have leaned on him every day for advice and counsel regarding the Army National Guard."

Newman also stressed the importance of Stockton's state police experience in the contribution he made to the Virginia Guard.

"His experience has been invaluable," Newman said. "His expertise in law enforcement operations has dramatically increased our situation awareness in operations where we partner with the Virginia State Police, and dramatically improved our ability to plan with our interagency partners."

Huxtable's military career began when he enlisted in the Air Force in 1971, and in May 1982 he was commissioned as a second lieutenant. After transferring to the Virginia Army National Guard in 1984, Huxtable worked full-time as the deputy director of facilities management for the Virginia Army National Guard.

He became the director of facilities management in 1992, and served there until May 2000 when he was assigned as the full-time Virginia Army National Guard Chief of Staff. In addition to his full-time service, Huxtable also served as the commander of the 276th Engineer Battalion from 1996 to 1998.

General Assembly recognizes Virginia Guard

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia General Assembly recognized the contributions of the Virginia National Guard with two Joint Resolutions presented April 25 at the Virginia National Guard Officer and Enlisted Conferences in Virginia Beach.

Del. John A. Cosgrove presented the House Resolution to retired Command Sgt. Major Bob Huffman, president of the Virginia National Guard Enlisted Association, and Virginia Senator Mark R. Herring presented the Senate Resolution to Capt. Mark Widener, president of the Virginia National Guard Officer Association.

The presentations took place during the annual conferences for both organizations.

House Joint Resolution No. 910 was agreed to by the House of Delegates Feb. 20, 2009 and by the Senate Feb. 25. Senate Joint Resolution No. 455 was agreed to by the Senate Feb. 19 and by the House of Delegates Feb. 23. Both resolutions celebrate the accomplishments of the Virginia National Guard and the Virginia



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Del. John A. Cosgrove (center) presents the House of Delegates Resolution to retired Command Sgt. Major Bob Huffman, president of the Virginia National Guard Enlisted Association, and Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia April 25 in Virginia Beach.

Defense Force in 2008.

Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, commended both Cosgrove and Herring for their efforts in supporting the Virginia National Guard.

In particular, Newman credited the two legislators for their important support of full funding of the Virginia National Guard State Tuition Assistance Program.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Virginia Senator Mark R. Herring (center) presents the Senate Resolution to Capt. Mark Widener, president of the Virginia National Guard Officer Association, and Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, April 25 in Virginia Beach.

Herring and Cosgrove co-chair the Virginia National Guard Caucus in the General Assembly.

“The National Guard is part of every military operation that goes on, whether it is Iraq, Afghanistan or Kuwait,” Cosgrove said.

“They are part of the front lines, and we truly appreciate and are very grateful for the service and sacrifice that each one of you in uniform makes for the Commonwealth of Virginia.”

Cosgrove also thanked the spouses for their support of the men and women in the Virginia National Guard who answer the call and come to the defense of their country.

Herring expressed his pride in serving in a district that is home to Company C, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment.

“I can’t tell you how proud I am of those Soldiers and their families, and I can tell you that the General Assembly is proud of the Virginia National Guard and each and every member who serves in it.”

Herring did not read the entire resolution, but he focused on one important section of the resolution.

“The General Assembly recognizes the courageous men and women who are serving in our National Guard who have contributed greatly to our nation’s defense, to the security of our commonwealth and have helped spread the cause of freedom around the world,” he said.

For 140 members of the General Assembly to agree on anything is pretty powerful, Herring said.

Newman also presented the Virginia National Guard Distinguished Service Medal to the Honorable John Marshall, Secretary of Public Safety, for his outstanding service to the Virginia National Guard.

VDF conducts civil disturbance training

By 2nd Lt. Henry C. Howells, IV
Virginia Defense Force Public Affairs

The Virginia Defense Force’s Military Police Company conducted a field training exercise April 3-5 at the Petersburg Armory to hone their skills in handling civil disturbances.

The company, bivouacked in the armory for the weekend, was conducting one of its two annual weekend training exercises.

The training included use of the riot baton and formations for civil disturbance. 1st Lt. Jim Stanley, company commander, said these exercises provide, “a realistic training experience while building camaraderie, which is important for a team that could be operating in stressful situations.”

The VDF’s Military Police is gearing up to move to battalion strength with its new commander, Maj. Jim Head. The targeted expansion includes three companies, Northern Metro (Fredericksburg), Southern Metro (Petersburg) and Western Metro (Powhatan).

New additions to the battalion include a contingent of JROTC personnel from Patrick Henry High School in Hanover County who were training with the MP Company.

One such member, Pfc. Ezra Marsh, 17, who plans to attend



Photo by 2nd Lt. Henry C. Howells, Virginia Defense Force Public Affairs

Members of the Virginia Defense Force practice riot control techniques during a field training exercise April 3-5 at the Petersburg Armory.

North Georgia State University and enter their ROTC program, said, “I want to expand my learning, gain experience and I know it will help later if I enter the military.”

The VDF’s commanding general, Maj. Gen. John Taylor, attended the exercise and reiterated to the troops the need for continued recruitment, but emphasized that “retention of good personnel is hard and that is why we do this training. People volunteer to provide a service to the commonwealth and this is the VDF’s investment in our people.”

The Salvation Army took the opportunity to jointly train with the VDF by providing food service for the force. Ben Pennington of the Richmond Area Command “wants to develop relationships with other emergency service responders.”

Supporting the VDF during this exercise gave the Salvation Army volunteers an opportunity to practice their role in ‘mass feeding.’

The Virginia Defense Force is the commonwealth’s military reserve. The force is governed by the military laws of Virginia and managed by the Virginia Department of Military Affairs.

It presently has 950 volunteers to support the citizens of the commonwealth.

Further information about the VDF may be found on its website: www.vdf.virginia.gov, or by contacting division headquarters at the Virginia National Guard armory, 500 Dove Street, Richmond, Virginia 23222; local: 804-228-7018; toll free: 866-791-9164.



Photo by 2nd Lt. Henry C. Howells, Virginia Defense Force Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. John Taylor, commanding general of the Virginia Defense Force, addresses the VDF military police company during a training exercise April 3-5 at the Petersburg Armory.

Warrior Transition Unit holds Healthcare Covenant signing ceremony

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Community-Based Warrior Transition Unit-Virginia held a ceremony to sign the U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Healthcare Covenant March 5, 2009 at the Founder's Inn in Virginia Beach, Va.

"This is a ceremony designed to recognize our Wounded Warriors and to reaffirm our commitment to provide world-class healthcare coverage to our warfighters," said Capt. Russell Britt, commander of the CBWTU-VA. Britt said the unit had about 40 Wounded Warriors in attendance, along with about 20 cadre members, and the unit hosted a dinner for the Soldiers after the signing ceremony.

The covenant is part of an Army-wide program that kicked off during Wounded Warrior Month in November 2008. Leaders from the Army medical community reaffirmed the service's commitment to provide world-class care to wounded Soldiers and their families by signing the Army Warrior Healthcare Covenant Nov. 13 at Fort Sam Houston.

Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. Eric Schoomaker and Command Sgt. Maj. Althea Dixon, command sergeant major of the Medical Command, signed the covenant during a conference with senior medical officials.

"This is not a flash in the pan; it's a sustained pledge," Schoomaker said. "This is going to be here for the duration as long as we are medics, as long as the next generation of medics are around we're going to be taking care of [wounded, ill and injured Soldiers] and their families."

The covenant pledges sustained care that is commensurate with the sacrifices Soldiers and their Families have made, Schoomaker said. It provides for first-rate care in a healing environment for recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration.

The CBWTU-VA is currently managing about 225 Wounded Warriors and has a cadre of approximately 40, Britt said. These Soldiers come from active duty Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve units across the country, and the cadre is made up of Army Guard and Reserve personnel. About 20% of the Wounded Warriors and about 30% of the cadre are assigned to the Virginia Army National Guard, Britt said.

Col. Larry Heisler, commander of Task Force North Atlantic Regional Medical Command, and Command Sgt. Major Geoffrey Grant, the command sergeant major of the TFNARMC, signed the covenant along with Britt.

The primary mission of a CBWTU is to provide high quality health care and administrative processing for National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers while allowing them to live and perform duties close to their homes and families. Soldiers work at an armory or Reserve Center within the confines of their medical condition.

Nationwide, the CBWTU program currently manages over 1,400 Soldiers and is staffed primarily by mobilized Army



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Col. Larry Heisler, commander of Task Force North Atlantic Regional Medical Command, signs the Wounded Warrior Healthcare Covenant during a ceremony hosted by the Community-Based Warrior Transition Unit- Virginia March 5, at the Founder's Inn in Virginia Beach, Va.

National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers who provide command and control for National Guard and Reserve Soldiers undergoing medical treatment in neighborhood healthcare facilities.

At a CBWTU, an experienced nurse case manager manages the Soldier's care. The case manager coordinates healthcare appointments, tracks the Soldier's progress, and ensures that his or her care meets Army and TRICARE standards. Medical care is focused on returning Soldiers to their pre-mobilization health status.

If after medical treatment, a Soldier does not meet retention standards, he or she is referred to a series of boards under the Physical Disability Evaluation System. The Physical Evaluation Board has responsibility for determining any service-connected disability.

Nationwide, more than 265 ARNG Soldiers are assigned as cadre in support of CBWTUs.

Prior to the CBWTU program, injured or ill Army Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers who remained on active duty for treatment had to live at an Active Army installation. Not only did the surge overwhelm the installation housing and medical capacity, it kept Soldiers away from their families, units, and civilian employers. The CBWTUs have provided command and control, administrative support, medical case management, and medical processing for more than 1,400 Soldiers.

"It is a great program," said Sgt. Travis Zeoli, a truck driver assigned to the 1710th Transportation Company. "My case manager treats me like her own child and makes sure I have everything I need. I couldn't ask for more. Anything I need, all I have to do is call and they get it for me."

Zeoli works in the South Boston armory where he is just a few blocks away from his physical therapist and orthopedic surgeon. After his rehabilitation is complete, he hopes to return to job as a corrections officer.

The biggest benefit of the program is being able to rehabilitate at home, Zeoli said. "I started at Fort Knox for three months doing my rehabilitation, but now instead of being gone, I am home with my family. I get to see them every day."

Top Virginia Guard Soldier, NCO chosen for 2009

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers and noncommissioned officers of the Virginia Army National Guard gathered at Fort Pickett to compete in the commonwealth's Soldier of the Year and NCO of the Year competition March 28 and 29.

Sgt. 1st Class Maurice Brown of Hopewell was selected as the Virginia Army National Guard NCO of the Year and Spc. Jennifer Chisholm of Hampton took top honor as the Virginia Guard Soldier of the Year. Brown also won the competition at the state and regional level in 2007.

Over the weekend, nine Soldiers and NCOs competed against one another for the title of Soldier of the Year and NCO of the Year for the state of Virginia. The Soldiers and NCOs were tested on their individual Warrior knowledge, marksmanship, physical strength and ability, and an appearance board.

The Soldiers started the day Saturday with an Army Physical Fitness Test to gauge the physical strength and endurance of the participants. Several of the Soldiers scored over 300 on the extended scale.

Following the APFT, the candidates demonstrated their marksmanship skills via the EST 2000, an indoor simulated M-

16 range. Two of them qualified marksman (23-29 targets), two qualified sharpshooter (30-35 targets), and five qualified expert (36-40 targets).

After completing the rifle qualification they were tested on their knowledge of common warrior tasks. They were tested on employing a claymore mine, reacting to unexploded ordnance, performance of several first aid tasks and several other key Soldier skills.

On Sunday the warriors donned their Class A uniforms and were sent up against a board of sergeants major where they were critiqued on their military appearance and bearing. They were also asked a series of pre-selected questions testing their knowledge of military justice, military history, weapons systems and current events.

Representing Virginia in the NCO of the Year will be an important responsibility for Brown, especially during the Year of the NCO. "Having the Year of the NCO is good recognition and it's good to put it out there to let people know how important NCOs are," said Brown. "However, I think we have always been here and always been doing what we're supposed to."

According to Brown the competition will help young Soldiers see that becoming NCO of the Year is an obtainable goal

in their careers. "You have to keep progressing," said Brown. "It's a motivation thing for young Soldiers. As you go through the ranks you still have to be on top of your game; you can't slack off."

To be eligible to compete in the competitions the candidates must first meet a series of pre-requisites. They must have qualified as an expert with their individual weapon (36 out of 40 targets), scored a

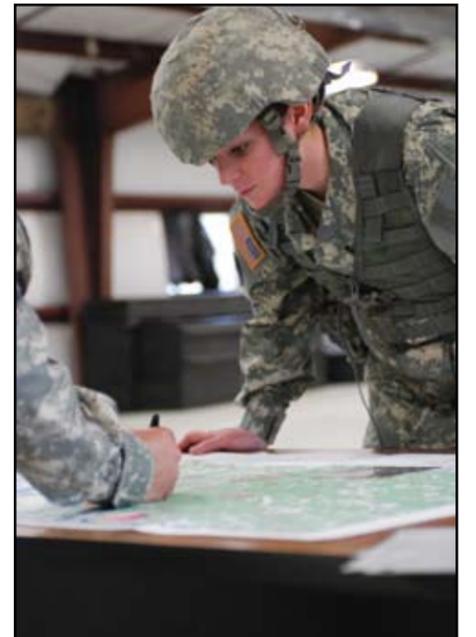


Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Va. Guard PAO

Spc. Jennifer Chisholm is tested on terrain features on a military map before being selected as the 2009 Virginia Army National Guard Soldier of the Year.

minimum of 70 points on each event during the Army Physical Fitness Test, and must meet the height and weight standards of the U.S. Army.

Events like this at the state level are important for Soldiers and NCOs, according to Command Sgt. Maj. Carl Holcomb, Virginia Army National Guard command sergeant major. This will prepare them for the next rung and show them what they can expect to compete against at the regional level.

Ten command sergeants major made up the board that added up all of the points and reviewed the packets to decide the winners. In addition to their duties on the board, the senior enlisted leaders, along with other NCOs, were cadre for the day's events.

The winners of the competition will move on to the regional competition May 17-19 at Fort Pickett. There they will compete against the winners of other states in the region.

"We stand a good chance of taking it all with these two Soldiers we are sending," said Holcomb. "It's nothing that can't be done."



Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Sgt. 1st Class Maurice Brown from Maneuver Training Center tests the fuse of an M18A Claymore during the Warrior tasks portion of the NCO of the Year Competition.

Junior enlisted take top honors at rifle competition

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Virginia Guard Soldiers and Airmen from around the commonwealth met April 4-5 at Fort Pickett to compete in the Virginia Guard State Rifle Competition. Spc. Randy Hawes of Company B, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment and Senior Airman Mark Kramer of the 203rd RED HORSE Squadron had the overall highest combined scores respectively.

According to Maj. Robert Puleo, acting state marksmanship coordinator, 16 Airmen and Soldiers attended the competition at ranges 11 and 20 at Fort Pickett April 4 and 5. The participants fired M-16 rifles and M-4 carbines at targets ranging in distance from 50 to 300 yards.

"We had perfect weather for the match," said Puleo. "Everyone that participated had a great time shooting, and got off a lot of



Courtesy Photos

Left- Spc. Randy Hawes from 1st Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team accepts the trophy for first place in the Virginia National Guard State Rifle Competition from Maj. Robert Puleo. Right- Senior Airman Mark Kramer of the 203rd RED HORSE receives the trophy for earning second place aggregate score in the competition.

rounds down range."

The top two teams from this event will be invited to attend the regional tournament this fall at Fort Indian Town Gap, Pa., as well as the Winston P. Wilson tournament at Camp Robinson, Ark., according to Puleo.

The leaders of the competition were two junior enlisted personnel. Hawes, who had the highest aggregate score, hit a total of

411 targets, with 7 rounds hitting the center portion of the target.

The second place winner, Kramer, put a total of 393 rounds in the targets with 13 placed in the center of the target.

Coming up in May, Virginia will host the Virginia National Guard State Pistol Competition at Fort Pickett. The event will be held May 16 and 17 on Range 9 of the Fort Pickett range complex.

MTC to receive stimulus funds for restoration projects

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia National Guard Maneuver Training Center at Fort Pickett is scheduled to receive approximately \$7.5 million in funding for infrastructure investments as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, according to an announcement made March 24 by U.S. Senators Jim Webb and Mark R. Warner. The funds released by the Department of Defense are part of a state-wide investment of almost \$330 million.

According to the news release from Senators Webb and Warner, the projects are designed to repair aging infrastructure, improve energy efficiency, improve our nation's military capability and create jobs for Virginians.

"This \$330 million direct investment in maintenance and modernization of Virginia's military installations will both strengthen our national security and stimulate economic growth at a time when Virginia's communities need it most," said Senator Webb in the release.

"These projects will help create jobs in the short-term while also promoting longer-range energy savings and improving quality-of-life circumstances for many of Virginia's military families," Senator Warner said in the release.

According to documents provided by the Virginia National Guard Facilities Management Office, the stimulus funds for Fort Pickett will be used in three projects. The intent of the projects is to reduce energy consumption and upgrade existing facilities.

"Fort Pickett is extremely excited about receiving this stimulus package," said Col. Tom Wilkinson, commander of Fort Pickett. "Not only will the renovations planned be advantageous to the Soldiers and units who train here through quality of life initiatives, but also to the full-time forces stationed here. We will also be able to make some significant energy saving improvements to better position us for the future. These upgrades will only enhance our goal of positioning Fort Pickett as a premiere training facility."

Approximately \$1.7 million is scheduled for energy upgrades of buildings at Fort Pickett that will include lighting, heating and air conditioning and insulation. The other two projects are two phases of interior renovations scheduled for \$2.8 million and \$3 million for each phase.

The interior renovation projects at Fort Pickett will include thermal insulation and moisture protection, replacing interior doors and frames, new paint, ceiling replacement and replacement of current heating systems with more energy efficient heating and cooling systems.

Funds will also be used to install more energy efficient lighting and upgrade data and phone systems.

The buildings targeted for the projects include facilities used by the full-time staff at Fort Pickett as well as barracks buildings, dining facilities, administrative office space and supply facilities used by units that come to Fort Pickett for training.

The funds have not been released at this point, but are scheduled to be obligated in this fiscal year. The projects should take about 18 months to complete.

Virginia Soldier sees dream to fruition

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Sgt. Charles Jones, a Soldier currently overseas, recently received great news when he was informed that Virginia Governor Tim Kaine signed Senate Bill 817 into law, which will create three new license plates to be sold throughout the commonwealth. This news is especially near to Jones' heart since he has been working on the initiative for one of these plates for two years.

On March 30 Kaine signed the bill that will create a special license plate for the Northern Neck area of Virginia.

The news was a victory for Jones, a Virginia Army National Guard Soldier currently deployed to Iraq with the 180th Engineers Company out of Powhatan, who came up with the idea for the Northern Neck License Plate after coming home from his first deployment to Iraq back in 2004. Jones noticed different license plates for the Eastern Shore and Virginia Beach on vehicles. He wondered why there wasn't a license plate for the Northern Neck.

When Jones decided to pursue his license plate idea, he first pitched the proposal to (then) Delegate Rob Wittman.

"I had pitched the idea around in my head for awhile, but didn't know who specifically should benefit from it should it pass a revenue sharing venture," said Jones. "Upon listening to Mary Louisa Pollard talk about the mission of the Northern Neck Land Conservancy, I knew then that this organization was worthy of the funds. All I had to do then was write up the proposal and send it."

"In some cases, the General Assembly has allowed the assessment of an extra fee above the added cost of the specialty plate itself and transferred the money raised by the fee to the organization supporting the plate's message," said Kaine.

With the proposal in the hands of Wittman it was passed along to State Senator Richard Stuart. Stuart then carried the bill all the way through the State Senate where it was passed with no hold-ups.

Eventually, the bill did hit a snag in the House of Delegates Transportation committee, according to Jones. The House requested that the Northern Neck Land Conservancy present the required 350 applications up front before they would



Courtesy Photo

Sgt. Charles Jones poses with a mock of the proposed Northern Neck license plate he developed with the Northern Neck Land Conservancy.

pass the bill. With the bill tabled for the year, Jones and the Northern Neck Land Conservancy got to work acquiring the applications.

According to the Governor, the message conveyed on specialty plates must be approved by the General Assembly and are only issued after at least 350 motorists pay the necessary fee.

Susan McFadden of Open Door Communications in Kilmarnock offered her services to the project and the Land Conservancy was able to draw up a concept of the license plate to sell to the public.

With the financial backing of the local banks in the area, the group was able to advertise on the radio and in the local papers, as well as set up application displays at several businesses. Their effort resulted in over 430 applications.

"I was able to stay in touch with Senator

Stuart, as well as Del. Albert Pollard, who represents the Northern Neck, and Del. Ed Scott from Culpeper, who sits on the House Transportation Committee through e-mail," said Jones, who began his deployment in October 2008. "They all assured me of the success of the bill."

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles will begin accepting applications for the new license plate July 1.

Individuals already applied through the Northern Neck Land Conservancy should see their plates sometime near the end of the fall or early next year.

"I just thought it would be a simple endeavor when I first started. But very little in government is as simple as it seems. But in the end, when I finally get back from deployment and I see the license plates on the road, it will all have been worthwhile," said Jones.

Virginia Guardsmen now enlist electronically at Fort Lee MEPS

By Capt. Fred Moore
Fort Lee MEPS

Virginia National Guard applicants now use a new biometric process to enlist at the Fort Lee Military Entrance Processing Station. The biometric process, known as e-Security, went into effect April 2.

E-Security is designed to streamline the enlistment process, allowing the MEPS to process applicants more securely, efficiently and accurately. Developed by the United States Military Entrance Processing Command, the biometric hardware is currently being installed in all 65 MEPS located throughout the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.

E-Security enables the Virginia National Guard to generate a positive identification for each potential Guardsman at their first contact with the Department of Defense. When they arrive at the Fort Lee MEPS, each applicant's index finger is scanned

and driver license-type photograph is uploaded into the USMEPCOM Integrated Resource System database. This action creates a standard DoD biometric e-Signature process that prevents fraudulent enlistment, otherwise known as "identity switching." The new system also requires less paperwork, results in better applicant accountability throughout the enlistment process, and permits the applicant to sign his or her contract with a fingerprint.

"It's a futuristic version of an old technique of 'make your mark,'" said Spc. Juanita Harvey, a Virginia National Guard administrative assistant currently on temporary active duty orders as a human resource assistant in the Fort Lee MEPS Operations Department. Harvey is one of three Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers on duty at the jointly-staffed Fort Lee MEPS.

During fiscal year 2008 Fort Lee MEPS processed over 13,207 applicants for

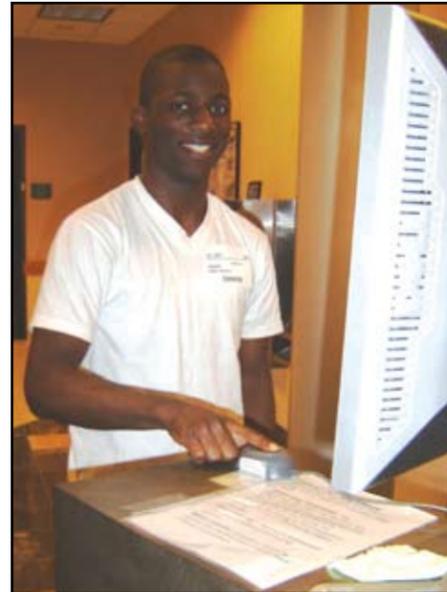


Photo courtesy of Fort Lee MEPS

Future Virginia Guard Soldier Ronnie Howard from Hampton Roads, Va., signs into Fort Lee MEPS using his biometric signature.

enlistment, among them 2,235 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen. That number may well double in fiscal year 2009.

Va. Guard participates in Sexual Assault Awareness Month

By Capt. Matt Nowak
Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs

Guard units from across Virginia participated in Sexual Assault Awareness Month during the month of April. Sexual Assault Awareness Month is intended to highlight the fact that the Army's mission is not only national defense, but the defense and safety of those who voluntarily risk their lives for the nation's defense. Sexual assault degrades mission readiness and is fundamentally at odds with the responsibility of the men and women in uniform to treat all people with dignity and respect.

"I always thought of sexual assault as something that the women had to prevent by acting and dressing in a manner as to not draw attention to themselves," Master Sgt. Debra Mendez said. "After going through [Sexual Assault Response Coordinator] training in Little Rock and dealing with victims of sexual assault, I realized that prevention and awareness are the keys to solving this growing problem in the military."

Mendez, who is currently Virginia's Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, is in the process of setting up displays and bringing "I. A.M. Strong" and "Our Strength is for Defending" posters to all the armories in the state including the Army and Air Guard.

The goal for the program is for every Soldier and Airman to understand that it is their duty to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment in the Virginia Guard.

Mendez will also begin working with the newly trained "Wing SARC" to make sure that the Sexual Assault Prevention and



Photo by Capt. Matt Nowak, Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs

Spc. Miranda Jagers traces her hand and signs her name as a pledge to "use strength for defending" and to understand it is her duty to prevent Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment.

Response program in Virginia is a joint effort between the Army Guard and the Air Guard.

I. A.M. Strong is the Army's campaign to combat sexual assaults by engaging all Soldiers in preventing sexual assaults before they occur. The letters in I. A.M. Strong stand for Intervene, Act, and Motivate. It is intended to engage others to stop sexual assaults, sexually offensive language and gestures that create an environment friendly to this abuse.

Maritime Raider 09 invades Central Virginia



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Evan D. Marcy

A Soldier from 37 Canadian Brigade Group guards his position during Exercise Maritime Raider 09 March 3 at Fort Pickett.

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Canadian Army Reserve Soldiers from parts of Newfoundland, Labrador and New Brunswick mobilized to the United States to conduct operations as part of Exercise Maritime Raider 09 at the Virginia National Guard Maneuver Training Center at Fort Pickett, Va. Feb. 27 to March 8. The exercise is the culmination of the collective training performed throughout training year 2008-2009.

The exercise, which consisted of approximately 450 members of 37 Canadian Brigade Group, along with elements of Land Force Atlantic Area, 35 Field Ambulance, 72 Communications Group and about 145 participants of the U.S. Army, is to conduct operations in a coined scenario environment and prepare Soldiers for a possible deployment to Afghanistan, said Lt. Col. Sean Leonard, officer-in-charge of Higher Control, 37 CBG.

Throughout the year the units have been focusing on their individual battle task standards to prepare them for Exercise Maritime Raider 09, where the units came together to conduct their collective battle tasks standards and work as a sub-unit, said Leonard.

Maritime Raider 09 is a counter-insurgency type operation. The Soldiers focused on improving patrolling, defensive position operations and ambushes in a scenario-based environment, according to Leonard.

This year marked the second time the 37 CBG has conducted Maritime Raider here. According to Leonard, one of the reasons the 37 CBG chose Fort Pickett's MTC was the temperate conditions that the region often has this time of year. However, when the area saw eight to 12 inches of snow and below freezing temperatures at the beginning of the exercise, the Canadians had to focus on the other positives of Fort Pickett.

With over 20 live-fire ranges, an urban warfare complex, simulated forward operating bases, and several training villages at Fort Pickett, the Canadians had plenty of events to distract them from the harsh Virginia weather.

"The facilities are excellent!" said Leonard. "They have all kinds of ranges to suit all kinds of weapons systems that we have, and the availability of helicopters and the support from the Americans are just excellent."

"We don't just come for the weather... We also come for the facilities," explained Lt. Dianne Groulx, assistant G-1 of 1st Royal New Brunswick Regiment.

Virginia Guard Incident Response Force trains to support civil authorities

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Incident Response Force simulated supporting local civil authorities in the aftermath of a major hurricane during a Situational Training Exercise conducted April 3-5 at Fort Pickett.

The Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team is the Virginia Guard's designated Incident Response Force, the unit that gets the first call when state or local government needs Guard support in the event of a natural or man-made disaster in the commonwealth.

Different companies in the battalion have been assigned special "force package" missions for search and rescue, security and evacuation, explained Lt. Col. Scott Smith, commander of 1st Battalion.

"We've had the IRF mission for about 12 months now, so the purpose of this exercise was to rehearse some of the things we could be asked to do for our state mission," Smith said.

Smith explained the training scenario simulated the Virginia Guard assisting local authorities in the Virginia Beach area in the aftermath of a large hurricane. The Fort Pickett urban training site simulated several city blocks in Virginia Beach, and Soldiers from the battalion acted as local law enforcement to interact with the Guard Soldiers conducting the training.

A simulated incident command center was established, and platoon leaders would receive assistance requests from the local "sheriff."

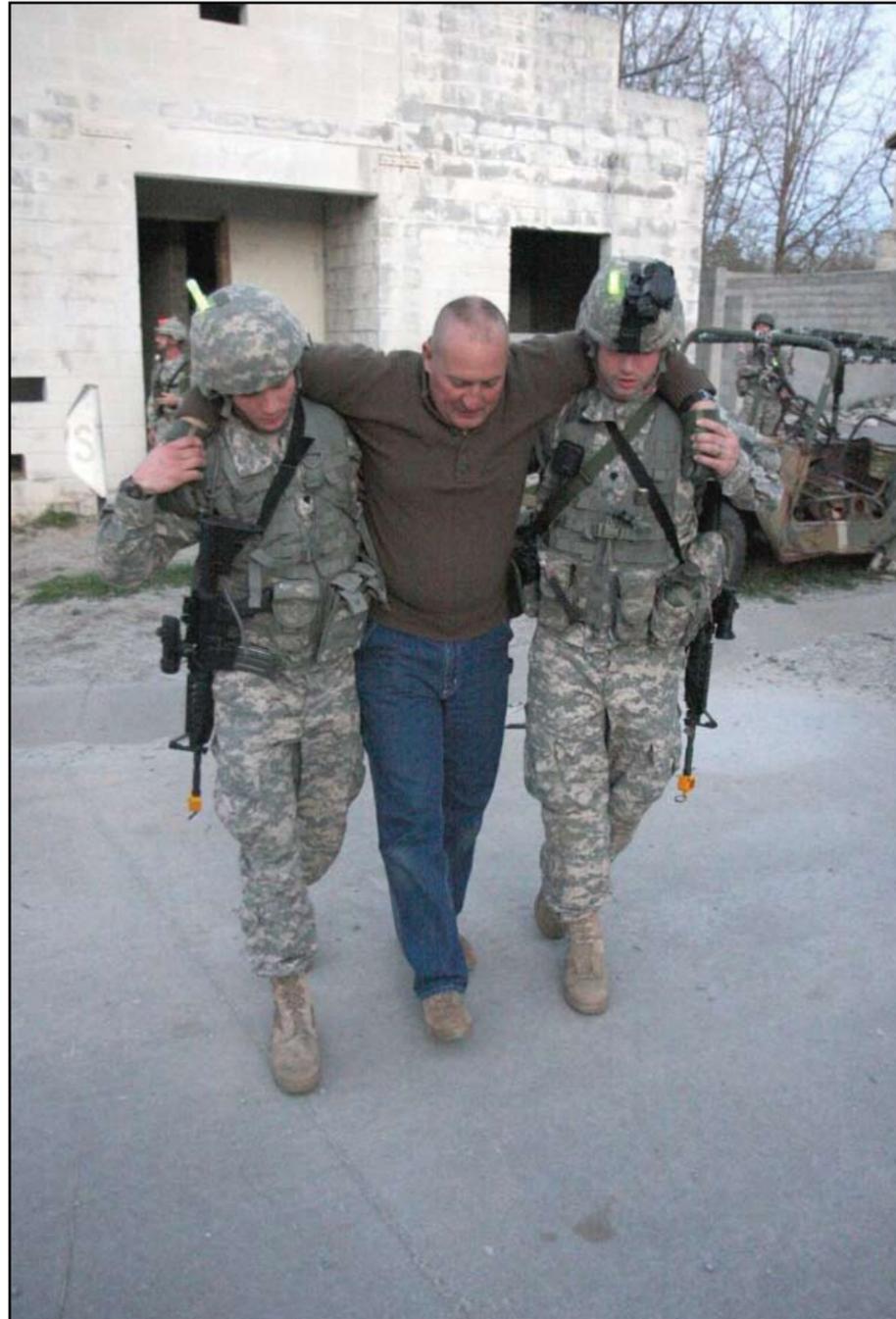


Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers from the Virginia Guard Incident Response Force assist a simulated casualty during a situational training exercise April 3-5 at Fort Pickett.

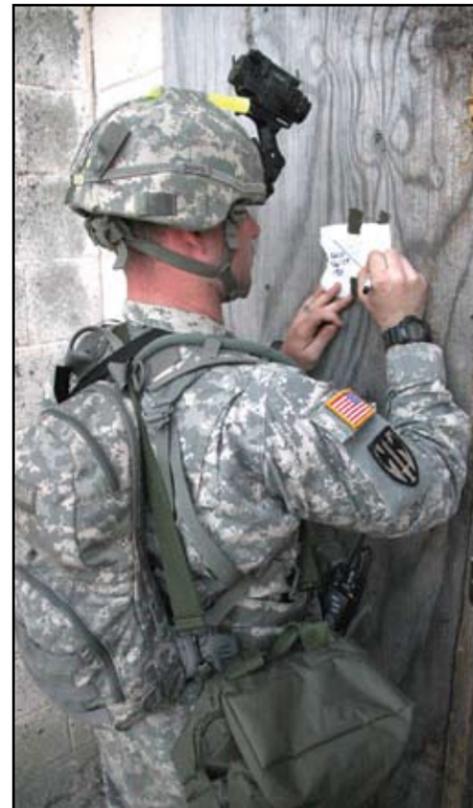


Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard PAO

A Soldier prepares a diagram indicating the results of a building search.

In the scenario, there have been reports of looting, so security forces needed to be put in place to augment local law enforcement and buildings needed to be searched for possible casualties, Smith explained. Any "injured" citizens would be evacuated to an area in the urban training site designated as the medical treatment facility.

Company A Soldiers from Bedford and Farmville are assigned the search and rescue mission, and they conducted training with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management during March drill on building search procedures.

Company B Soldiers from Lexington and Company C Soldiers from Christiansburg are assigned the dismounted security mission and Company D Soldiers from Pulaski and Martinsville are assigned the mounted security mission. Company E Soldiers from Roanoke and Soldiers from the Headquarters Company are assigned the evacuation mission.

The units executed the training scenarios in platoon-sized elements of about 30 Soldiers, Smith said. Each iteration of the training lasted for about two to three hours, and platoons were able to run through the scenario two times during the day and once at night.

"The training has been great," Smith said. "We are much better prepared now for a state mission as a result of this training, and we are going to be able to take the lessons we learn here and use to improve future training."

A representative from VDEM was on hand to observe the training, and Smith said they hoped to be able to increase the scope of the scenario in the future to include VDEM personnel working side by side with Guard personnel.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

A Soldier from 1st Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team (pictured in a black coat) plays the role of a local sheriff and interacts with Virginia Guard personnel during a situational training exercise conducted April 3-5 at Fort Pickett.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers prepare to evacuate a simulate casualty in order to provide medical assistance.